

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Monday, August 3, 2009

Wyoming WIC Program Provides Breastfeeding Support, Services *World Breastfeeding Week is August 1-7*

Help with breastfeeding is one of the many services offered to eligible Wyoming mothers and their babies through the Wyoming Department of Health's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program.

"Most people are aware that WIC helps many Wyoming mothers buy groceries for themselves and for their children," said Janet Moran, WIC program section chief with the Wyoming Department of Health. "Not everyone realizes WIC also encourages successful breastfeeding among new moms as another way to promote healthy young families."

"Breast milk is custom-made for growing, healthy babies," said Barbara Buyske, WIC program nutritionist. "It's jam-packed with vitamins and minerals, nutrients and anti-bodies that help babies fight illness."

Buyske continued, "Various studies over the years have shown that breastfeeding can help reduce obesity, diabetes, leukemia, and Sudden Death Infant Syndrome in children and helps their moms by lowering the risk of breast and ovarian cancer and Type 2 diabetes."

WIC helps support breastfeeding moms with advice and training from breastfeeding specialists, a larger WIC food package for mom and infant at six months of age, manual and hospital-grade pumps for WIC participants and personal use electric pumps for those WIC moms who also participate in EqualityCare (Medicaid) and referrals to other community lactation professionals when needed. In addition, nine local WIC agencies offer breastfeeding peer counselors to work with new moms during prenatal and postpartum periods.

Other community resources for breastfeeding support include county health offices, community hospitals, private practice lactation consultants, physician offices, other mothers and breastfeeding support group leaders.

WIC participants specifically include pregnant women, post partum women, breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age five. WIC also serves homeless women and children under special regulations. For families to be eligible, income levels must be at or below 185 percent of the U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines. Women and children who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps), Wyoming EqualityCare (Medicaid), and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs are automatically eligible for WIC.

With 19 local agencies and 18 outreach clinics in Wyoming, WIC serves approximately 13,000 women and children around the state.

For more information, contact a local WIC office or the WIC state office at (307) 777-7494.

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